



Council Meeting: May 22, 2007

SUBJECT: COUNCIL ELECTION DEBATES (COUNCIL ETHICS SUB COMMITTEE REPORT)

REPORT IN BRIEF

On occasion City Council requests that an item be placed on its agenda, noting that no staff analysis or recommendation is expected. Item No. 7 for May 22, 2007 will be presented by Councilmember John Howe – no staff report will be delivered.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made through posting of the Council agenda on the City's official notice bulletin board, posting of the agenda and report on the City's Web site, publication of the Council agenda in the San Jose Mercury News, and the availability of the report in the Sunnyvale Library and the Office of the City Clerk.

RECOMMENDATION

None.

Reviewed by:

Robert A. Walker, Assistant City Manager
Prepared by: Katherine Bradshaw Chappelle, City Clerk

Approved by:

Amy Chan
City Manager

Attachment

- A. Memo from Councilmember John Howe regarding Council Election Debates (Council Ethics Subcommittee Report)

May 16, 2007

To: Sunnyvale City Council

From : Councilmember John Howe

Subject: November 2007 Council election debates

The Sunnyvale City Council formed an Ethics Subcommittee with Vice-Mayor Tony Spitaleri, Councilmember Chris Moylan and myself as members.

The subcommittee chose to split up the work, and I was to work on the Council election debates. This request is limited to the debates only. The number of debates was to be at least four.

The proposal is as follows: 1) One debate for each council seat (by number) to be moderated by Patti White – an attorney who does not live in Sunnyvale, has not contributed to any candidates in Sunnyvale, and has a wonderful reputation in the Santa Clara County community. The debate would only be for the specific seat, be televised and replayed on KSUN. In a contested election each candidate would submit questions for the other candidate or candidates. The timing of the debates would be close to when the absentee ballots are scheduled to be mailed. If a candidate does not have an opponent – generic questions would be asked of the single candidate.

2) A fifth debate would be held on the eve of the election. Only if both Patti White and a representative of the Markkula Center of Applied Ethics (at the University of Santa Clara) agree that something in a specific seat campaign was questionable – “hit piece”, misleading material or similar would the fifth debate take place. Any campaign for a specific seat that does not have a misleading element – the fifth debate would not take place.

The cost would be limited to the cost of using KSUN, and a representative of the Communications group, and our City Clerk as time keeper. Patti White has agreed to moderate the debates at no charge. I will contact Kirk Hanson from the Markkula Center if these debates are approved by Council. I believe that all Subcommittee members are in agreement.

